

Legal Education and Development (LEAD) Short-term English Program (STEP) APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The Legal Education and Development (LEAD) Short-term English Program (STEP) provides legal professionals training in the American legal system through intensive legal English courses in the United States. The program is open to current resident citizens of Tajikistan.

LEAD STEP's goal is to strengthen rule of law culture in Tajikistan by providing exceptional legal professionals with a broader understanding of comparative systems of law and increased opportunities to discuss Tajik and US law.

LEAD STEP is a program of IREX and the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) and is funded by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) of the US Department of State

Program participants will participate in a sixteen-week intensive English program with an emphasis on legal writing and legal vocabulary, followed by a four-week program focusing specifically on American Law and Legal English. Fellowships are contingent upon funding.

Under the terms of this grant and the laws governing the J-1 visa required for participation in LEAD STEP, Fellows must return to their home country immediately upon completion of the program for a period of at least two years. Fellows are not eligible for visa extensions or transfers (for example, J-1 to F-1) under any circumstances. No exceptions will be made.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Community Involvement: To further build Fellows' professional skills and expose them to the principles of community service and social responsibility in the United States, Fellows will also be required to participate in a volunteer community service project.

TECHNICAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Candidates will be considered without respect to race, color, religion, national origin, disability, or gender. Competition for LEAD STEP is merit-based and open to anyone who:

- Is a citizen, national, or permanent resident qualified to hold a valid passport issued by Tajikistan;
- Is the recipient of an undergraduate degree in law (four- or five-year study) by the time of the application;
- Is able to begin the short-term program in the United States in March 2012; and
- Is able to receive and maintain a United States J-1 visa.

Individuals in the following circumstances are NOT eligible for LEAD STEP:

- US citizens and permanent residents of the United States;
- Spouses of US citizens and permanent residents of the United States;
- Individuals currently participating in academic, training, or research programs in the United States;
- Individuals who have already been recipients of and participated in the LEAD Fellowship;
- Individuals currently residing or working outside Tajikistan;
- Individuals who have participated in an exchange visitor program sponsored or funded by the US Government (e.g., Public Affairs Sections at US embassies or other US government agency) for a period of more than six weeks **and** who have not fulfilled their two-year home residency requirement by the time of application;
- Individuals who have applied for US permanent residency in the past three years;
- Local employees of US missions abroad who work for the US Department of State including USAID are ineligible for grants during the period of their employment and for one year following the termination of employment;
- Immediate family members (i.e., spouses and dependent children) of the US Department of State including USAID employees for a period of one year following the termination of such employment. This provision does not disqualify self-supporting members of families who live apart from their parents;
- Persons arrested for, charged with, or convicted of a crime as further detailed by INL;
- Current IREX and ABA ROLI employees and consultants and their immediate family members (spouses, parents, children, and siblings) are not eligible to apply for any IREX or ABA ROLI-administered grant programs.

The US Department of State, ABA ROLI, and IREX reserve the right to verify all of the information included in the application. In the event that there is a discrepancy, or information is found to be false, the application will immediately be declared invalid and the applicant ineligible.

Applications not meeting the above technical eligibility requirements will not be forwarded to the selection committee.

FINANCIAL PROVISIONS OF THE GRANT

- J-1 visa support;
- Round-trip travel from Fellow's home city in Tajikistan to host institution in the United States;
- Monthly living stipend;
- Accident and sickness coverage;
- Tuition and mandatory university fees;
- Limited allowance for textbooks; and
- Alumni networking and training opportunities.

LEAD STEP provides no financial or visa support for dependents.

Deadline: 5:00 PM in Dushanbe on Monday, January 30, 2012

SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

LEAD STEP is conducted as a merit-based open competition. After the deadline, applications will be reviewed for technical eligibility and consideration for interview.

Chosen semi-finalists will be interviewed in Tajikistan by a third-party selection committee. Program finalists and alternates will be chosen based on results of the initial application review, interview, and demonstrated English capability.

IRES and ABA ROLI staff provide administrative support only and do not vote in the final selections. All applicants will be notified of their status in February 2012. Fellowships will begin in early March and continue through July 2012. Due to the volume of applications received, IRES will not be able to forward explanations to applicants that were not chosen as program finalists.

The selection panel will use the following criteria to evaluate applications (not in order of importance):

- Academic excellence (as demonstrated in undergraduate law degree, or equivalent; and any other academic experience);
- Relevant professional experience (preference is given to applicants with a minimum of one year's work experience);
- English proficiency (with competencies in written, reading, speaking, and listening comprehension);
- Demonstrated legal knowledge;
- Demonstrated leadership potential;
- Flexibility to be an exchange program participant;
- Commitment to return to Tajikistan immediately upon LEAD STEP completion; and
- Commitment to contribute to the development of Tajikistan's justice system and to share the program benefits with their community, including active participation in the Alumni Club.

PLACEMENT: Please note that all finalists will be placed at a pre-determined US institution for the duration of the program.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

- Please answer **ALL** questions on the application in English (except where specified).
- Write your full name in the top right corner of each page of your application and supplemental documents.
- **Include your full legal name. Write your family name (surname) first, exactly as it is spelled on your international passport (if available).** Do not translate name spellings (for example, write Mariya and not Mary).
- Include complete contact information (including index codes for all addresses and city/country codes for all phone and fax numbers). Do not translate street or city names into English, only into the English alphabet (for example, write Prospekt Mira instead of Peace Avenue).
- DO NOT leave a space blank. If a question does not apply to you, enter N/A (Not Applicable).

NOTES:

- Any documents submitted in addition to those specifically mentioned in the supplemental application will be discarded and not considered.
- Application materials will not be returned.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The deadline for applications for the Legal Education and Development (LEAD) Short-term English Program (STEP) is **5:00 PM in Dushanbe on Monday, January 30, 2012**. To be considered for the 2012 Legal Education and Development (LEAD) Short-term English Program (STEP), you must complete the

application *and* submit all required documents listed on the application. Please follow all instructions carefully.

Each application packet must include the following:

- Application
- Signed Privacy Policy Statement
- Three short answer questions
- List two references
- Résumé /CV
- Copy of International Passport
- Copies of TOEFL score reports (if applicant has previously taken the exam)

Applicants must submit their completed application and supplemental materials to the IREX or ABA ROLI office by the deadline:

IREX
40 Pushkin Street
Dushanbe, Tajikistan 734002
Tel: (+992 37) 224-58-65/20, 224-79-51
Fax: (+ 992 37) 224-65-89
Email: lead@irex.tj

ABA ROLI
6 Saltikov-Shedrin Street
Dushanbe, Tajikistan 734024
Tel: (+992 37) 221-15-02
Fax: (+992 37) 224-15-05
Email: abaroli.tajikistan@gmail.com

DO NOT send applications to Washington, DC. No application will be returned to the applicant after the end of the competition. For questions or additional program information, please call or email:

LEAD PROGRAM TIMELINE

January 30, 2012	Application deadline
Early February	Semi-finalists notified
Early February	Interviews
Mid February	Finalists and alternates announced
Late February	Pre-departure orientation
March	Arrival at Host University